

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 COME-00 EB-08 EPA-04 CEQ-01
CG-00 DOTE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 SOE-02 DODE-00
INR-07 IO-14 L-03 NSF-02 NSC-05 NSAE-00 PM-05
USIA-15 SS-15 SP-02 DOE-11 INT-05 /126 W
-----118022 242236Z /64

R 231703Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5750
INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

UNCLAS BRASILIA 0571

DEPARTMENT PASS EPA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EMIN; ENRG; BR
SUBJECT: MAJOR OIL SPILL-PORT SAO SEBASTIAO

REF: STATE 011564

FOLLOWING MESSAGE WAS PREPARED BY AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO:

1. SAO SEBASTIAO OIL SPILL (1/8/78) FROM LIBERIAN-REGISTERED
"BRAZILIAN MARINA" REPORTEDLY TOTALLED ABOUT 12000 TONS.
BY 1/19, INITIAL TRACES OF OIL HAD REACHED RIO DE JANEIRO OCEAN
BEACHES, SOME 125 MILES NORTHEAST OF SPILL, WITH BEACH AND
WATER POLLUTION AT UBATUBA, PARATI AND ANGRA DOS REIS AREAS
BETWEEN TWO POINTS. THROUGH NO EVIDENCE OF LONG-TERM DAMAGE
TO MARINE LIFE HAS YET BEEN FOUND, BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE
EXPRESSED FEAR THAT SARDINES (IN OVULATION PHASE THROUGH
FEBRUARY), SHRIMP AND, POSSIBLY, MUSSELS AND OYSTERS WILL BE
HARMED IN AFFECTED AREAS. AFTER TESTS WITH ABSORBENT PLASTICS
AND PAPER IMPORTED FROM JAPAN, BRAZILIANS HAVE CONCLUDED THAT
PHYSICAL CLEANING WITH PINE STRAW IS BEST METHOD TO COMBAT
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SPILL; MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN TO BEGIN CLEAN-UP OPERATIONS
IN MOST HEAVILY AFFECTED COASTAL AREAS. (LIMITED USE OF SUCTION
DEVICES IS ALSO BEING EMPLOYED).

2. PRESS HAS BEEN UNIFORMLY CRITICAL OF GOVERNMENT AND
PETROBRAS'S INABILITY TO CONTAIN OIL SPILL, CITING EVIDENCE
OF PAST FAILURES, AS WELL AS CONTINUING LACK OF ADEQUATE

EQUIPMENT FOR SUCH EMERGENCIES-ESPECIALLY FLOATIN (BOOM)
BARRIERS AND SUCTION DEVICES FOR OPEN OCEAN CLEAN UP.
PETROBRAS WAS ALSO CITICIZED FOR USING CHEMICAL DETERGENTS WHICH-
IT IS ALLEGED-WILL CAUSE OIL TO BECOME EMBEDDED IN BEACH SANDS,
PARTICULARLY SINCE THIS METHOD HAD BEEN TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS
IN THE CASE OF EARLIER SPILLS.

3. AS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE, EMBASSY
WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT INFORMED ON POSSIBLE ECOLOGICAL EFFECTS
OF SPILL.
JOHNSON

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Message Attributes

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